

Are You Ready for the Challenge?
Meeting the Healthier US School Challenge Criteria

Lesson 5: Meeting the Competitive Foods Criteria

Lesson Introduction and Learner Objectives

At the end of this lesson, participants will be able to:

1. Identify the HealthierUS School Challenge criteria for competitive foods
2. Evaluate product labels of commercially prepared foods and school-made recipes against the Challenge competitive foods criteria
3. Discuss competitive foods documentation required when applying for a Challenge award.

Lesson-at-a-Glance

Time	Topic	Task	Materials
5 minutes	Introduction and Overview	Introduce lesson.	
Objective 1: Identify HealthierUS School Challenge criteria for competitive foods.			
20 minutes	The Challenge Criteria for Competitive Foods	Discuss USDA definition of competitive foods. Discuss the Challenge criteria. Conduct Activity 1 using Handout 5.1.	Handout 1.2: <i>Criteria of the HealthierUS School Challenge</i> Handout 5.1: <i>Competitive Foods Criteria Bingo Activity</i>
Objective 2: Evaluate product labels of commercially prepared foods and recipes against the Challenge competitive foods criteria.			
20 minutes	Evaluate Product Labels and Recipes	Identify and discuss sample product labels. Conduct Activity 2 Using Handouts 5.2 through 5.12.	Handout 5.2: <i>Does Your Food Meet the HUSSC Competitive Foods Criteria?</i>

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			<p>Handout 5.3: <i>Formulas for Competitive Foods Calculations</i></p> <p>Flip chart and markers Calculators</p> <p>Handout 5.4: <i>Product Label 1: Honey Graham Crackers</i></p> <p>Handout 5.5: <i>Product Label 2: Flavored Tortilla Chips</i></p> <p>Handout 5.6: <i>Product Label 3: Snack Mix—Baked Snacks</i></p> <p>Handout 5.7: <i>Product Label 4: Soft Snack Cakes</i></p> <p>Handout 5.8: <i>Product Label 5: Cereal Bar—Blueberry</i></p> <p>Handout 5.9: <i>Product Label 6: Oatmeal Bar, 2.1 oz</i></p> <p>Handout 5.10: <i>Product Label 7: Oatmeal Bar, 1.4 oz</i></p> <p>Handout 5.11: <i>Product Label 8: Yogurt, Strawberry, Low-Fat</i></p> <p>Handout 5.12: <i>Product Label 9: Pizza, Whole</i></p>
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		<p>Conduct Activity 3, using Handout 5.16.</p> <p>Review Handout 5.17.</p>	<p><i>Grain with Cheese</i></p> <p>Handout 5.13: USDA's <i>Be Salt Savvy</i></p> <p>Handout 5.14: USDA's <i>Trim Trans Fats</i></p> <p>Handout 5.15: USDA's <i>Limit Saturated Fat and Cholesterol</i></p> <p>Handout 5.16: <i>Ingredient Sources of Dietary Components to Limit Activity</i></p> <p>Handout 5.17: <i>Competitive Foods Worksheets</i></p>
Objective 3: Discuss documentation of competitive foods for Challenge application.			
10 minutes	Documentation	Discuss what documentation will be required for the Challenge application if competitive foods are sold.	
5 minutes	Lesson Summary		
Total of 60 minutes		If all objectives and activities presented.	

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Lesson Plan

Introduction and Overview (5 minutes)

Materials Needed

Handout 1.2: *Criteria of HealthierUS School Challenge*

Say: Who can tell me what “competitive food sales” means to them?

USDA defines competitive foods as “any foods sold or served in school outside the school meal programs to children.

These foods may be available in your a la carte lines (this definition also includes 2nd or extra sales), in snack bars, student stores, vending machines, or even school activities and fund-raisers.

Ask: Why do you think USDA wants to see schools limit competitive food sales or at least restrict to healthful options? **Answer:** Studies show that children who eat school meals consume more of the food groups that the Dietary Guidelines recommend—fruits, vegetables, and milk. They also consume more nutrients than nonparticipants.

Studies indicate that school meal participation is inversely related to a la carte sales, i.e., school meal participation decreases as a la carte sales increase. Even sales of second or extra servings of items served in NSLP can displace other healthful foods in the meal.

Competitive Food Criteria

For the Gold levels, criteria apply anytime during the school day throughout the school campus.

For the Silver/Bronze levels, criteria apply during meal periods in the foodservice area(s).

The foodservice area refers to any area on school premises where program meals are served and/or eaten. School holiday or birthday parties are not included.

Discuss the Competitive Foods Criteria of the HealthierUS School Challenge

Say: Now let us look at competitive food sales and HUSSC. Even when you sell an extra carton of milk, or a juice, or an extra serving of a food item that’s already on the reimbursable lunch menu that day, it counts as a la carte sales, and therefore must meet the Challenge criteria for competitive foods.

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The only foods that are exempt from the competitive foods criteria are second servings or extra sales of the reimbursable lunch entrée (served on the day of the sales).

Perhaps you're wondering why other items served in school lunch have to meet the Challenge competitive foods criteria when they are sold a la carte, or as second servings—after receiving the reimbursable meal.

For example, you may have baked desserts on your lunch menu occasionally during the week. If a nutrient analysis were conducted for your menus for that week, you would probably find the average nutrients for the week meet the nutrient standards. So why must the same dessert, sold a la carte have to meet the Challenge criteria?

Do: Allow time for participants to respond. Review possible answers to guide discussion.

Answers: When the baked dessert is balanced with other foods within the school lunch menu during the week—with fruits and vegetables, grains and breads, low-fat and/or fat-free milk—the nutrients are averaged for calories, percentages of calories from fat and saturated fat. That's the basis of the Dietary Guidelines—foods eaten and balanced over time.

With a la carte sales and other vended sales, i.e., competitive food sales, students purchase foods individually, without regard to balance. If baked desserts or other high fat, high sugar items are for sale, students that purchase these foods frequently get a very unbalanced food pattern, with high fat, high sodium and added sugars, and high in calories—what we call low nutrient energy-dense foods. So for competitive foods, the nutrient criteria have to be applied to each food individually.

The HealthierUS School Challenge is an opportunity for USDA to recognize those schools that have gone beyond the limited competitive foods regulations and have voluntarily made the decision to either **eliminate** competitive foods from the schools or **limit sales** to those food and beverages that meet the Challenge guidelines.

Identifying the Competitive Foods Criteria

Activity 1 (20 minutes)

Materials Needed

Handout 1.2: *Criteria of the HealthierUS School Challenge*

Handout 5.1:

Competitive Foods Bingo

Say: When is the last time you have played Bingo? We are going to have some fun while we remind each other of the competitive foods criteria for the Challenge.

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Take a moment to find Handout 1.2: *Criteria of the HealthierUS School Challenge* and Handout 5.1: *Competitive Foods Bingo*.

The kind of Bingo we're going to play is a **human bingo** game. On your Bingo Worksheet, you'll find 25 boxes with a statement for you to supply the competitive foods criteria or facts. But you will have to seek out your fellow participants who can complete the description or answer for you. Have them do so and initial the square. Collect as many answers with initials as you can. You are not restricted to your table—move about the room as needed.

The goal is to collect as many initials as possible within the time limit in anticipation of playing Bingo.

When the music starts, say “Go”.

Note to Instructor: Allow about 12-15 minutes. Have a sticker ready for the first person who gets 5 in a row diagonally, or up and down and share their answers. Continue to award stickers to those who reach Bingo until all squares have been discussed.

Review the answers with the participants.

Evaluating Product Labels of Commercially Prepared Food Items Against Challenge Criteria (20 minutes with Activity 2)

Say: For those of you that sell foods and beverages a la carte, many of the products you sell are probably commercially prepared such as yogurt, energy bars, cookies, and other snacks. Most of the food and beverage items sold in vending machines, snack bars, and other places on campus will be commercially prepared, as opposed to school-made products.

If your school wants to receive one of the HealthierUS School Challenge awards or if your school simply wants to select and have available for sale healthier foods and beverages for students, you'll need to know how to evaluate labels of commercial products.

Activity 2: Evaluating Sample Products (15 minutes)

Materials Needed:

Handout 5.2: *Does Your Food Meet the HUSSC Criteria?* Activity

Handout 5.3: *Formulas for Competitive Foods Calculations*

Handout 5.4: *Sample Product Label 1: Honey Graham Crackers*

Handout 5.5: *Sample Product Label 2: Flavored Tortilla Chips*

Handout 5.6: *Sample Product Label 3: Snack Mix—Baked Snacks*

Handout 5.7: *Sample Product Label 4: Soft Snack Cakes*

Handout 5.8: *Sample Product Label 5: Cereal Bar—Blueberry*

Handout 5.9: *Sample Product Label 6: Oatmeal Bar, 2.1 oz*

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Handout 5.10: *Sample Product Label 7: Oatmeal Bar, 1.4 oz*

Handout 5.11: *Sample Product Label 8: Yogurt, Strawberry, Low-Fat*

Handout 5.12: *Sample Product Label 9: Pizza, Whole Grain with Cheese*

Calculators

Say: Turn to Handout 5.2: *Does Your Food Meet the HUSSC Competitive Foods Criteria* Activity for a list of snack products. Also find Handout 5.3: *Formulas for Competitive Foods Calculations*. Several of the Challenge criteria are based on percentages which will have to be calculated.

Go ahead and pull out all of the sample food product labels (Handouts 5.4-5.12) You will be using calculators which you'll find at your tables.

Do: Lead the group through a couple of sample labels using Handout 5.2, Handouts 5.3, and sample food labels (Handouts 5.4 through 5.12).

Say: Now that you know how to do the calculations, each table, working together, can evaluate the remaining sample product labels to determine whether any of them meet the Challenge criteria, or if not, why not.

Pick a Scribe/Reporter at your table by pointing to the person you want to be the Scribe/Reporter. The person with the most fingers pointing at them is the Scribe/Reporter. When your table has completed the evaluations, please stand.

Do: Allow about 10-12 minutes for the activity (music optional) but stop the activity when more than 1 table is standing.

Circulate among the tables to facilitate the evaluation. As you circulate, make these key points (or make points when you discuss answers):

- *Trans* fats can raise your blood cholesterol. They can also increase your risk for developing heart disease. We should be consuming as little **trans** fats as possible. Some *trans* fats are natural such as in meats while others may be added by food processors. It appears that the ones added in processing may be the worse.
- Sodium is a mineral found in many foods; most of our sodium comes from sodium chloride (salt). Sodium is used in many processed foods as a preservative.
- Eating too much sodium may contribute to high blood pressure in some people. The Dietary Guidelines recommends consuming less than 2,300 mg of sodium per day. This equates to about 1 teaspoon of table salt. If school lunch were to restrict the amount of sodium to 1/3 of the daily requirement, we should be providing less than 800 mg of

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sodium per lunch. It would be quite a dramatic reduction in school meals. The School Dietary Assessment Study (SNDA) III tells us that no school is meeting this benchmark and the average amount of sodium being served in a school lunch is 1,442 mg. Clearly we have a way to go! This is why the Challenge is putting limits on sodium for competitive foods.

Do: Review the answers with the participants.

Say: There is an on-line calculator now as part of the on-line HUSSC application that will simplify this work. They are located on the HealthierUS School Challenge web.

Evaluating School-Made Recipes Against the Challenge Criteria (5 minutes)

Materials Needed:

Handout 5.13: USDA's *Be Salt Savvy*

Handout 5.14: USDA's *Trim Trans Fats*

Handout 5.15: USDA's *Limit Saturated Fat and Cholesterol*

Handout 5.16: *Ingredient Sources of Dietary Components to Limit Activity*

Say: There are currently resource limitations for evaluating school-made recipes for competitive food sales. Resource limitations include:

- USDA Quantity Recipes do not include the analysis for *trans* fats or sugars.
- USDA Commodity Fact Sheets (USDA Foods) do not include the analysis for sugars.
- Current USDA-approved nutrient analysis software does not analyze for *trans* fats and sugars.
- The USDA Standard Reference Nutrient Database 20 does provide nutrition information on *trans* fats and sugars but they have not been incorporated into the CN Database for the software vendors.

USDA does not want to put a burden of doing nutrient analysis on schools that might not have the local resources. Therefore, USDA will require that the recipes used to prepare food items for a la carte sales (including extra sales) be included in the Application Packet, but at this time, a nutrient analysis of the recipes will not be required.

Schools are encouraged to review their recipes for *trans* fats, saturated fats, added sugars, and sodium. There are new USDA resources included in your Workbook. Handout 5.13: *Be Salt Savvy*, Handout 5.14: *Trans Fats*, and Handout 5.15: *Limit Saturated Fat and Cholesterol*, are great resources for schools to use in modifying their recipes.

We don't have time today to review these handouts but you are encouraged to use these handouts in school training.

Ask: How many of you prepare and sell school-made a la carte or extra sales?

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We will do an activity to help you evaluate your recipes for the dietary components you want to limit—sodium, *trans* fats, saturated fat, and added sugars.

Activity 2 (5 minutes)

Say: Look for Handout 5.16: *Ingredient Sources of Dietary Components to Limit*. Individually, match the recipe ingredients to the left with the dietary components that the Dietary Guidelines recommend we limit. When you review recipes that contain a lot of any of these components, be wary of how much sodium, saturated fat, *trans* fats, or added sugars may be in the final product.

Do: Allow participants a few minutes to complete and then review answers.

Competitive foods documentation required for Challenge application (10 minutes)

Materials Needed:

Handout 5.17: *Competitive Foods Worksheets*

Say: Please look for Handout 5.17: *Competitive Foods Worksheets*. The first worksheet is copied directly from the Gold/Gold Award of Distinction application. The second worksheet is a comparable one for the Silver/Bronze awards.

Ask: What do you think is different between the 2 worksheets? **Answer:** The Gold application is for competitive foods sold anytime during the school day, anywhere (cafeteria, vending machines, school stores, snack bars, fundraising activities, etc. The Silver/Bronze application is for competitive foods sold/served in the foodservice area(s) during meal time.

Please note what is required for documentation of competitive foods:

- For commercially-prepared items, the Challenge requires a copy of the competitive food calculator printout and a copy of the food label for each competitive food being sold/served:
 - Throughout the school campus during the school day for the Gold awards.
 - In the school cafeteria, during meal periods, for the Bronze/Silver awards
- For school-made recipes, copies of the recipes sold a la carte or for extra servings must be submitted with the Challenge application.

Do: Allow time for questions and facilitate answers.

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Lesson Summary (5 minutes)

Do: Ask the participants to discuss one idea they learned in this lesson and if they could use the idea in their school nutrition operation. Ask them to record this idea(s) at the end of Lesson 5 in their Workbooks.